

STATEMENT OF SENATOR SAM BROWNBCK
PAKISTAN EMERGENCY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
AND TRADE SUPPORT ACT

NOVEMBER 13, 2001

Mr. President. Today I rise to introduce the Pakistan Emergency Economic Development and Trade Support Act. This legislation will provide the President with the authority to reduce or suspend any existing duty on imports of textiles and textile products that are produced or manufactured in Pakistan. This Act is vitally important to shore up the economic strength of our strategic ally, Pakistan, so central to our nation's ability to continue to prosecute the war against terrorism.

Currently, Pakistan is providing invaluable basing rights and intelligence assistance to the United States as we continue to degrade and dismantle the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. Taking this action against the Taliban is crucial if we are to successfully locate and destroy Osama Bin Laden's Al Qaeda terrorist network, which the Taliban is currently harboring within Afghanistan's borders. Al Qaeda continues to represent public enemy number one in the war against terrorism.

Pakistan's bold stand against terror alongside the United States is not made in a vacuum. There are very real economic and social consequences in Pakistan for assisting the United States in our war effort, and it would be a failure of United States foreign policy not to pursue the means of assisting our ally in its time of need.

Textiles and textile products are Pakistan's main export. As a result of the war effort, invaluable orders for textile products made and exported by Pakistan have been canceled due to perceived instability in the region and a lack of confidence that such orders will ultimately be delivered. According to the Pakistan Textile and Apparel Group, Pakistan has witnessed a 64 percent reduction in orders for clothes that would be made from December through February by the 14 largest apparel factories in Lahore, Karachi, and Faisalabad. As a result, employment in these factories has dropped 32 percent from a year ago. The Pakistani government has estimated the overall decline in orders at 40 percent. This has very real consequences for the future of Pakistan, its stability, and its ability to forge a future of economic prosperity for its people.

As we are all aware, a small yet very vocal fundamentalist Islamic minority within Pakistan has spoken out against the Pakistani government's assistance to the U.S., has called for and implemented damaging general labor strikes, and has encouraged countless numbers of young Pakistanis to cross the border into Afghanistan to fight alongside the Taliban. A further weakened economy and increased unemployment – the clear results of a weak market for Pakistani textile exports – only adds to the influence of fundamentalists in Pakistan, by strengthening social and economic unrest on which fundamentalists prey.

Currently, the Pakistani government is devoting much needed resources to innovative and existing human development programs inside the country. Pakistan is spending a full 2 percent of its gross domestic product, approximately \$2 billion per year, on a program that combines improved primary education, basic health care, and skills training for income generating activities for the Pakistani people. Pakistan's efforts to utilize human development programs to lift up the Pakistani people are central to stemming the tide of fundamentalist elements in our ally. An already weakened economy, hampered by years of sanctions, combined with increased unemployment only serve to add to existing social dissatisfaction and civil unrest within Pakistan. This undercuts the valuable impact of human development on Pakistan, makes increasing these human development efforts far more difficult, and jeopardizes the long-term stability of our ally.

As a weakened market for Pakistani textile exports ultimately renders human development programs within Pakistan less effective, especially the primary education element, young Pakistani's are faced with the prospect of no education and therefore no quality employment. An all-to-frequent alternative to this prospect is for young Pakistani's to attend Madrasas – Islamic religious schools run by mullahs -- where too often basic skills and primary education are supplanted by religious teachings used to indoctrinate young Pakistani's into following the perverted version of Islam followed by Osama Bin Laden, Al Queda, and the Taliban.

Mr. President, I urge all of my colleagues to work with me to provide the President with authority to assist Pakistan in the textile market immediately. Such action is vitally important to the stability of our important ally, and victory in our nation's war against terrorism. Failing to take quick action only strengthens our enemy.